Understanding Society: An Introduction to Sociology
Fall 2024: August 26th to December 12th

Location and Contact Information
Lecture: Tuesday/Thursday 11:20am-12:45pm
Location: Shiley Hall, 101
Instructor: Rina James
Pronouns: they/them/theirs (Not sure what this means? Just ask, I'm happy to explain.)
Email: jamesk@up.edu
Student hours: by appointment

Description of Course
This course serves as an introduction to the social scientific discipline of Sociology. The sociological perspective focuses on exploring questions about the society in which we live—its organizations and institutions, and the cultural and social forces that influence individuals. Throughout the term, we will overview the basic theories and methods in sociological research and identify how these approaches distinguish sociology from other social and natural sciences. Students will learn to apply concepts from these theories to their own lives, and to think critically about social issues in contemporary society.

Course Prerequisites or Co-requisites
There are no prerequisites or co-requisites for this course.

Course Format and Teaching Methods
This is an in-person course. We will meet twice weekly, and students are expected to come to class having read the required materials for that day. Class time will consist of a mixture of lecture, discussion, and in-class activities. Students will be additionally responsible for completing assignments and submitting them via the course site between meetings. A specific outline of the activities you are expected to complete each week is included in the course schedule; assignment deadlines are also specified on the course site.

Important course updates will be communicated in class when possible, as well as through the 'Announcements' forum on the course site; please subscribe to the forum so you will be notified if there is a communication to the class.

Questions regarding the course should be communicated in class or sent to the instructor via email. If you choose email, you can expect a response within 24 hours during the week. Note that I may not respond to emails on the weekends, so please ensure any urgent inquiries are sent by 4pm Friday, so they may be answered prior to the end of the work week. Otherwise, you may not receive a response before Monday morning.

Student hours are available by appointment. These provide an opportunity for you to discuss questions or concerns with the instructor, including but not limited to those involving course content or assignments; sociology as an academic discipline or professional vocation; navigating higher education more generally; or accommodations or extensions beyond those already provided through course policies.

The Learning Objectives
The University of Portland offers a liberal arts UP Core Curriculum with a vision of students acquiring knowledge, skills, and values that will prepare you to respond to the needs of the world and its human family, while having a foundation of multiple lenses to address enduring questions of human concern. The UP Core achieves this vision by cultivating six habits of heart and mind in all UP graduates regardless of major.

As a priority for this Core class, our focus is the "DI&CG: Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and the Common Good" habit. As part of developing that habit this course will prioritize students learning to "DICG.3 Engage social issues with a sense of civic responsibility." Toward this end, as one specific UP Core learning outcome for this class is that "students who complete this course will be able to apply sociological knowledge regarding social inequalities to explain how systems of power and oppression shape our lives and influence efforts to advance social justice and equity."

Course Learning Objectives

- Achieve a general understanding of major social theories and research techniques in sociology.
- Recognize how culture shapes the way we view the world and identify cultural differences between and within societies.
- Critically question and examine the world around you.
- Analyze the various dimensions of social and cultural diversity in American society, including class, race, ethnicity, and gender.
- Learn to live and contribute in a diverse society and interdependent world.
- Develop a sociological imagination, understanding how larger social forces affect people's life chances.
- Students who complete this course will be able to apply sociological knowledge regarding social inequalities to explain how systems of power and oppression shape our lives and influence efforts to advance social justice and equity.

Required Textbooks and Materials

This course uses a free, open-source introductory text available online. Each chapter also includes links to external resources, which you are encouraged to explore. Any additional readings listed in the syllabus will be available on the course website.

You can access the course text at the following URL:
https://openstax.org/books/introduction-sociology-3e/pages/1-introduction

If you prefer a print copy of the textbook, it is also available for purchase through Amazon:
https://a.co/d/3CSj8JJ

Absences and Class Participation Policy

Absences: Generally, students are expected to attend all class sessions according to the instructor's direction. Students who feel unwell should NOT attend class in person. These students should inform their instructor as soon as possible.

Should the instructor need to miss class, the course may be temporarily conducted remotely. Should the instructor be unable to teach for an extended period of time, the respective department or unit will find a substitute to continue the course.

Attendance will not be taken during the course, but graded in-class assignments do count towards students' participation grade.

Syllabus Assignment

Earn three extra credit points by proving you read the syllabus and emailing me a picture of a cat before the end of the first week of class. It doesn't have to be your cat, but if it is then I'd also like to know their name. If you don't like cats, you can pick a different animal. Or even a plant. I'm not picky.

Assignments and Grading

In-class participation (30%): During the semester, I will assign 13 short assignments to complete during class time. These assignments may include short quizzes, discussion questions, group work, or brief written reflections, among other things. These assignments will be graded pass/fail, and are meant to capture attendance/participation. These assignments will be given roughly weekly; however, only 10 of the 13 assignments will count towards your final grade, meaning you can miss up to three without penalty.

Learning activities (35%): There are eight learning activities assigned throughout the semester; their due dates are listed in the course syllabus. The specifics of these assignments will vary, but all will ask you to reflect on or apply concepts and lessons from the course materials. Assignment prompts and descriptions are listed on the course site under the week for which they are due; due dates are also listed in the assignment descriptions on the Moodle drop box. We will also review expectations in class ahead of each deadline.

Midterm exam (15%): The midterm exam will be a take-home assignment asking to address five short answer questions

covering material from the first seven weeks of the course. **The midterm exam is due Sunday, October 13th by 11:59pm.**

Final project (15%): In lieu of a final exam, you will be asked to select one of three options for a final course project: these include writing a short research paper; conducting an independent research project; or developing an educational resource. Details on these options will be provided following spring break. **Your final project is due by 11:59pm on December 10th.**

Course reflection (5%): To wrap up the course, you will be asked to write at least 750 words about the five most important things you learned in this course. Each item should be clearly numbered, and emphasize substantive knowledge (i.e., conceptual or empirical knowledge, not study skills or similar). This assignment is pass/farl, and will be evaluated based on whether what you discuss was part of the course, was accurately described based on course materials, was described in detail (i.e., you should write paragraphs rather than bullet points), and was at least 750 words. **Course reflections are due by 11:59pm on December 12th.**

Late Work Policy

I understand that students increasingly have obligations outside of coursework. **In an effort to build flexibility into the course, each student is allotted two late work passes.** You may use these for a free 48-hour extension on any assignment, entirely at your discretion. You do not need to explain the circumstances (unless you really want to)—you can simply send an email indicating that you would like to use one of your late work passes and specifying which assignment you are using the extension for. **You may not use your extensions for the final course reflection.**

Given the ongoing pandemic, I also aim to be flexible for students affected by illness or life circumstances during the semester. **If you think you may need more accommodation than an extension on a single assignment, please reach out to make arrangements with the instructor** *before* **missing deadlines.**

Course Schedule

Please look over the following schedule carefully so that you can plan your work accordingly. All readings and assignments should be completed before the start of class on the day for which they are listed. Please note that the course readings and schedule are subject to change as the semester progresses.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES
UNIT ONE: FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIOLOGY
Week 1: 8/26 – 8/30 – Course Introduction
Aug. 27th: In-class introductions and syllabus review No required reading Aug. 29th: No required reading
Week 2: 9/2 – 9/6 – Introductions to Sociological Thinking
Sep 3rd: Read: Chapter 1: An Introduction to Sociology **Learning activity "Syllabus Quiz" due by start of class** Sep. 5th: Read: Mills, C. Wright. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pgs. 3-8.

Week 3: 9/9 – 9/13 – Sociological Methods

Sep. 10th:

Read: Chapter 2: Sociological Research

Sep. 12th:

No assigned reading

Week 4: 9/16 – 9/20 – Classic Sociological Theory

Sep. 17th:

Read: Chapter 4: Society and Social Interaction, section 4.2
Read: Marx, Karl. 1848. "The Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat." Part One in *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.
Learning activity "Exploring Research Methods" due by start of class

Sep. 19th:

Read: Weber, Max. 1922. "Class, Status, Parties."
Read: du Bois, W.E.B. 1903. "Of Our Spiritual Strivings." Excerpt from *The Souls of Black Folks.*

UNIT TWO: INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND SOCIETY

Week 5: 9/23 – 9/27 – Culture and Society

Sep. 24th:

Read: Chapter 3: Culture

Sep. 26th:

Read: Chapter 4: Society and Social Interaction, sections 4.1 and 4.3

Week 6: 9/30 – 10/4 – Socialization and the Self

Oct. 1st:

Read Chapter 5: Socialization
Learning activity "Norms at UP" due by start of class

Oct. 3rd:

Read: Cooley, Charles Horton. 1902. "The Looking Glass Self."
Read: Mead, George Herbert. 1934. "The 'I' and the 'Me'." Part 22 in *Mind, Self, and Society*.

Week 7: 10/7 – 10/11 – Groups and Organizations, Deviance and Stigma

Oct. 8th:

Read: Chapter 6: Groups and Organizations
Learning activity "The Social Self" due by start of class

Oct. 10th:

Read: Chapter 7: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control

Take-home midterm due Sunday, October 13th by 11:59pm

Week 8: 10/14 – 10/18 – Fall Vacation

Fall vacation: no class, readings, or assignments this week.

UNIT THREE: SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

Week 9: 10/21 – 10/25 – Class Inequality

Oct. 22nd:

Read: Chapter 9: Social Stratification in the United States

Oct. 24th:

Read: Chapter 10: Global Inequality
Learning activity "Deviance in the News" due by start of class

Week 10: 10/28 – 11/1 – Gender and Sexuality

Oct. 29th:

Read: Chapter 12: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

Oct. 31st:

Read: Fausto-Sterling, Anne. "The Five Sexes." The Sciences (March/April 1993): 20-24.
Read: Transgender 101
Read: 'They' Is Merriam-Webster's Word of the Year 2019

Week 11: 11/4 – 11/8 – Gender and Sexuality, cont., Race and Ethnicity

NO CLASS MEETINGS THIS WEEK. USE CLASS TIME TO VIEW THE FILMS LISTED BELOW.

Nov. 5th:

Watch: *Tough Guise 2: Violence, Manhood, and American Culture*
(Available on Kanopy through the UP library here: https://www.kanopy.com/en/up/video/216724)
You are required to take notes on the film and submit them by 11:59pm. Notes should be at least one full page and highlight key ideas present in the film.

Nov. 7th:

Watch: *Race: The Power of an Illusion (Episode 1)*
(Available on Kanopy through the UP library here: https://www.kanopy.com/en/up/video/66397)

You are required to take notes on the film and submit them by 11:59pm. Notes should be at least one full page and highlight key ideas present in the film.

Week 12: 11/11 – 11/15 – Race and Ethnicity

Nov. 12th:

Read: Chapter 11: Race and Ethnicity
Learning activity "Gender Media Analysis" due by start of class

Nov. 14th:

Read: McIntosh, Peggy. 1989. "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack."

UNIT FOUR: SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Week 13: 11/18 – 11/22 – Labor and Economics

Nov. 19th:

Read: Chapter 18: Work and the Economy

Nov. 21st:

No assigned reading

Week 14: 11/25 – 11/29 – Family Life

Nov. 26th:

Read: Chapter 14: Relationships, Marriage, and Family
Learning activity "Power and Oppression Reflection" due by start of class

Nov. 28th:

Thanksgiving break: no class, readings, or assignments due

Week 15: 12/2 – 12/6 – Social Change

Dec. 3rd:

Read: Chapter 21: Social Movements and Social Change

Dec. 5th:

Course wrap-up
Learning activity "Sociological Family History" due by start of class

Week 16: 12/9 – 12/12 – Finals Week

Dec. 10th:

Final project due Dec. 10th by 11:59pm

Dec. 12th:

Course reflection due Dec. 12th by 11:59pm

Academic Integrity Statement

The University of Portland is a diverse academic community of learners and scholars who are dedicated to freely sharing ideas and engaging in respectful discussion of those ideas to discover truth. Such pursuits require each person, whether student or faculty, to present truthfully our own ideas and give credit to others

for the ideas that they generate. Thus, cheating on exams, copying another student's assignment, including homework, or using the work of others without proper citation are some examples of violating academic integrity.

Especially for written and oral assignments, students have an ethical responsibility to properly cite the authors of any books, articles, or other sources that they use. Students should expect to submit assignments to Turnitin, a database that ensures assignments are original work of the student submitting. Each discipline has guidelines for how to give appropriate credit, and instructors will communicate the specific guidelines for their discipline. The Clark Library also maintains a webpage that provides citation guidelines at https://libguides.up.edu/cite.

The misuse of AI to shortcut course learning outcomes will be treated as a violation of academic integrity comparable to plagiarism or cheating. Faculty are responsible for including a written "Course AI Policy" in their syllabi that clearly states what they consider appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI in the context of their courses. Students are responsible for using AI in ways that do not detract from the established learning outcomes of the course. All members of the scholarly community are responsible for demonstrating sound judgment in discerning when and how to utilize AI in their work, upholding standards of citation, originality, and integrity.

Assessment Disclosure Statement

Student work products for this course may be used by the University for educational quality assurance purposes. For reasons of confidentiality, such examples will not include student names.

Accessibility Statement

The University of Portland strives to make its courses and services fully accessible to all students. Students are encouraged to discuss with their instructors what might be most helpful in enabling them to meet the learning goals of the course. Students who experience a disability are encouraged to use the services of the Office for Accessible Education Services (AES), located in the Shepard Academic Resource Center (503-943-8985). **If you have an AES Accommodation Plan**, you should meet with your instructor to discuss how to implement your plan in this class. Requests for alternate location for exams and/or extended exam time should, where possible, be made two weeks in advance of an exam, and must be made at least one week in advance of an exam. Also, if applicable, you should meet with your instructor to discuss emergency medical information or how best to ensure your safe evacuation from the building in case of fire or other emergency. All information that students provide regarding disability or accommodation is confidential. All students are responsible for completing the required coursework and are held to the same evaluation standards specified in the course syllabus.

Mental Health Statement

Anyone can experience problems with their mental health that interfere with academic experiences and negatively impact daily life. If you or someone you know experiences mental health challenges at UP, please contact the University of Portland Counseling Center (https://www.up.edu/counseling/) in the upper level of Orrico Hall (down the hill from Franz Hall and near Mehling Hall) at 503-943-7134 or hcc@up.edu. Their services are free and confidential. In addition, mental health consultation and support is available through the Pilot Helpline by calling 503-943-7134 and pressing 3. The University of Portland Campus Safety Department (503-943-4444) also has personnel trained to respond sensitively to mental health emergencies at all hours. Remember that getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do – for yourself, for those you care about, and for those who care about you. For more information on health and wellness resources at UP go to www.linktr.ee/wellnessUP .

Non-Violence Statement

The University of Portland is committed to fostering a safe and respectful community free from all forms of violence. Violence of any kind, and in particular acts of power-based personal violence, are inconsistent with our mission. Together, all UP community members must take a stand against violence. Learn more about what interpersonal violence looks like, campus and community resources, UP's prevention strategy, and what we as individuals can do to assist on the Green Dot website, www.up.edu/greendot. Further information and reporting options may be found on the Title IX website, www.up.edu/titleix.

Statement on Ethics of Information

The University of Portland is a community dedicated to the investigation and discovery of processes for thinking ethically and encouraging the development of ethical reasoning in the formation of the whole person. Using information ethically, as an element in open and honest scholarly endeavors, involves moral reasoning to determine the right way to access, create, distribute, and employ information, including: considerations of intellectual property rights, fair use, information bias, censorship, and privacy. More information can be found in the Clark Library's guide to the Ethical Use of Information at libguides.up.edu/ethicaluse.

The Learning Commons

Students may receive academic assistance through Learning Commons tutoring services and workshops. The Co-Pilot peer tutoring program provides students with opportunities to work with other students to get help in writing, math, group projects, and many other courses. Schedule an appointment to meet with a Co-Pilot (tutor) by visiting the Learning Commons website (www.up.edu/learningcommons). Students can also meet with a Co-Pilot during drop-in hours. Check the Learning Commons website or stop by the Learning Commons in BC 163 to learn more about their services. Co-Pilots are a wonderful support along your academic journey.